



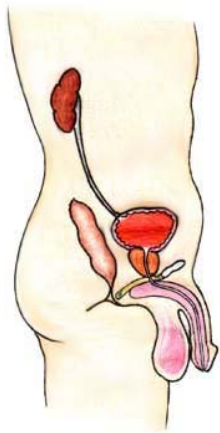
X-Plain™ *Treatment for Erectile Dysfunction-* *Viagra™*

Reference Summary

Impotence is a common condition. A man who is impotent is persistently unable to achieve or maintain an erection for satisfactory sexual intercourse. About 30 million men in the U.S. have erectile dysfunction. Erectile dysfunction is the medical term for impotence.

Most men experience during their sexual life the inability to achieve or maintain an erection.

Professional help is needed when erectile dysfunction becomes a persistent problem.



This reference summary will help explain the causes and treatment options for erectile dysfunction. It will also explain the benefits and side effects of the drug Viagra™.

Viagra is a new oral medication for treating erectile dysfunction from the pharmaceutical company, Pfizer.

Viagra is available only by prescription.

Before prescribing Viagra, your doctor will make sure that this medication is a good treatment option for you.

Anatomy

The penis has three main tube-like structures.

Two of these are long tubes known as “corpora cavernosa”, one on each side of the penis.

The third tube-like structure is the “corpus spongiosum”, located between the two corpora cavernosa. It contains the urethra.

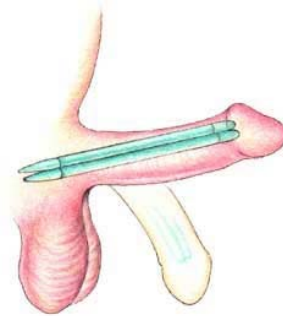
The urethra is the tube through which urine and semen exit the body. It does not play a role in forming or maintaining an erection.

When the penis is flaccid (or not erect), the corpora cavernosa are not filled with blood.

Sexual stimulation, both physical and mental, causes the brain, nerves, blood vessels, and hormones to send orders to relax

the muscles around the corpora cavernosa.

As the muscles around the corpora cavernosa relax, the corpora cavernosa fill up with blood.



When the corpora cavernosa trap the blood, they expand and the penis becomes firm and elongated. This results in an erection.

After orgasm, the blood empties from the corpora cavernosa through the veins of the penis. The penis becomes soft.

Testosterone is a sex hormone secreted by the testicles, and is important in regulating the frequency and magnitude of a penile erection.

The younger the patient, the easier it is to achieve and keep an erection. Erectile dysfunction is more common among older men;

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it isn't an inevitable consequence of aging.

About 1 in 4 men above the age of 65 are affected by erectile dysfunction.

Symptoms and Their Causes

Erectile dysfunction can be caused by many disorders. It can be caused by medications, psychological factors, or physical factors.

Medications are a leading cause of erectile dysfunction. Some medications taken for depression or high blood pressure could cause erectile dysfunction.

Some causes of erectile dysfunction are psychological. A man's failure to achieve an erection could have originated from his abuse of alcohol, cigarettes, or recreational drugs.



If the man continues to fear not being able to have an erection, he may develop persistent psychological impotence.

Stress and other psychological factors can cause erectile dysfunction. When erectile dysfunction is caused by psychological factors, the male can achieve spontaneous

erections when sleeping or early in the morning before going to the bathroom but cannot achieve an erection when making love.

Marital or job stress, alcohol or drug abuse, performance anxiety, financial problems, and other factors can all play a role in starting, maintaining, or worsening erectile dysfunction.

Physical impotence is caused by a disease, injury, or operation.

Examples of diseases that can cause impotence are:

- Diabetes,
- High blood pressure,
- Cholesterol deposits in the blood vessels,
- Nephritis,
- Liver disease.

Examples of injuries that can cause erectile dysfunction are injuries to the:

- Penis,
- Pelvis,
- Spinal cord, and
- Brain.

Examples of surgeries that can cause erectile dysfunction are:

- Operations in the pelvis,
- Surgical removal of the prostate gland, bladder or rectum due to cancer,
- Radiation therapy to the pelvis.

Hormones are substances produced by the body to control body functions. The lack or

excess of hormones could also cause erectile dysfunction.



Diagnosis

Your doctor will evaluate your condition in order to determine the specific cause of erectile dysfunction and prescribe the best treatment for you.

The evaluation usually includes a medical history, a detailed sexual history, a physical examination, and other basic tests. The doctor tries first to determine if the causes are psychological or physical.

If no erection can be achieved during sexual activity, special devices can be fixed on the base of the penis at bedtime to monitor whether an erection has occurred during sleep.

If that test shows that an erection has occurred, there is a good chance that the erectile dysfunction could be caused by psychological factors.

Treatment Options

The treatment of erectile dysfunction depends on the cause or causes. For instance, if medications are the cause of erectile dysfunction, changing some of the medications or their dosages may help.

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If erectile dysfunction is caused by severe clinical depression, antidepressant drugs may be the first course of treatment.

In very rare cases, erectile dysfunction is caused by lack of hormones. Hormone replacement therapy could help in these cases. The use of pills or injections usually will restore normal erections in such rare cases of hormone-related impotence.



If psychological reasons are causing erectile dysfunction, counseling or sex therapy may be recommended.

There are several other treatment options, which your doctor can recommend. These include oral medication, such as Viagra, urethral suppositories, injection, vacuum devices, and surgery.

Viagra is a new oral medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), for treating erectile dysfunction. The usage of the drug will be explained in more detail after listing the other treatment options.

In one medical treatment option, the patient pushes a urethral suppository into the urethra with a special applicator. The medication dissolves in the urethra and is absorbed into the penis. After about 5 minutes, an erection is

achieved. This treatment helps many men achieve an erection.

Another treatment option for erectile dysfunction is the use of a vacuum pump and a tension ring.

A plastic tube is placed over the penis and the patient uses the pump to draw blood into the penis by removing air from the cylinder. In most patients, an erection is produced in one to two minutes.

A rubber constriction ring is then placed at the base of the penis to keep the blood in the penis and maintain the erection. The vacuum tube is then removed.

The ring should be taken off within 30 minutes, or in case of pain, severe discoloration, or cooling of the penis. Leaving the ring in place longer than 30 minutes could cause damage to the penis.

Another treatment option for erectile dysfunction is injections of special medications by the patient himself directly in the penis. This may help achieve an erection.

Through a small needle, a special medication that allows the blood to be trapped in the corpora cavernosa may be injected directly in the penis five to fifteen minutes before intercourse. This usually gives an erection that can last up to one hour. The injection is given with a very thin needle.

If you and your doctor choose this option, you will be taught how to administer the injections yourself.

If none of the previous treatments are helpful or practical, surgery may be recommended.

The most common surgical alternative to help erectile dysfunction is to place an implant inside the penis to help achieve an erection.

In rare cases, vascular surgery is recommended if the blood vessels of the penis are causing the erectile dysfunction.

There are several types of implants to choose from. These implants differ in the manner they are operated, how natural the erection feels, the number of components implanted, and the possibility of mechanical malfunction.

The following is a brief description of some implants.

A malleable implant consists of two rods that are inserted into the corpora cavernosa of the penis. The rods may either be positioned up for intercourse or down for everyday activities.

This is a simple implant and is easy to use. It has few parts and is durable. However, the patient will always have a rigid penis.

Another type of implant consists of self-contained inflatable cylinders.

To produce an erection, the patient pumps the top of the cylinders to force fluid into the cylinders making the penis stiffer. To make the penis soft again, the patient simply bends the penis.

This is a simple implant and is easy to use.

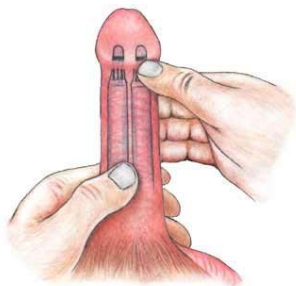
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Another type of implant is more complex mechanically.

However, it allows the implant to be pumped into a more solid erection. It can then be deflated.

Prior to intercourse, the patient inflates the device by squeezing the pump. The pump can be placed in the scrotum.

This implant is slightly more complex to place and operate.



How Does Viagra Work?

A man achieves an erection when the muscles of the penis relax, allowing blood to flow and pool in the corpora cavernosa of the penis.

Viagra relaxes the smooth muscles of the penis allowing the corpora cavernosa to fill with blood.

The usual dose of Viagra is taken one hour before sex, preferably on an empty stomach or after a light meal.

The effect of the pill may last for up to 4 hours. This means that an erection may occur up to 4 hours after taking the pill. It does NOT mean that the erection will last for 4 hours.

For Viagra to work, sexual stimulation is necessary.

Viagra is NOT an aphrodisiac. It will not cause an erection if there is no sexual stimulation. The sexual stimulation can be physical or mental.

Viagra is effective in a majority of patients. The rate of improvement also depends on the cause of the erectile dysfunction.

Most patients are satisfied with the improved quality of the erection and with the ability to maintain the erection for satisfactory sexual intercourse.

Viagra does not increase the libido (sex drive) and does not affect the orgasm.

Viagra comes in three different dosages, 25 milligrams, 50 milligrams, and 100 milligrams. Your doctor will tell you at what dosage to start.

Viagra should be used only once a day when needed. It should not be used with other forms of treatment for erectile dysfunction such as injections and vacuum devices.

Depending on the individual response, the dosage may have to be adjusted by your doctor. The goal is to use the lowest dose that works in order to avoid having side effects. The higher the dose used, the higher the chance of side effects.

Contraindications and Side Effects

Like any other medication, Viagra has side effects and conditions in which it should not be used. You should know about them in case they happen. By

being informed you will help your doctor know when and what dosage of Viagra to prescribe to you.



Viagra may increase the effectiveness of nitrates. Nitrates are medications used to decrease the blood pressure in patients with hypertension and/or patients with heart diseases such as angina.

The use of Viagra with nitrates can cause a lower than expected blood pressure.

This extra lowering of blood pressure could potentially be fatal and therefore contraindicates the use of Viagra. The patient and his physician should look for another treatment option for erectile dysfunction.

This is one of the major reasons that you should inform all of your doctors about the use of Viagra prior to starting any new medications.

Patients who share their prescribed Viagra pills with their friends may endanger the lives of their friends who may be taking medications that are not compatible with Viagra.

Other commonly prescribed medications, such as Cimetidine®, Erythromycin®, and

other medications, may affect the levels of Viagra in the blood. The dosage of Viagra may therefore need to be adjusted when taken with other medications. Make sure to tell all of your doctors and pharmacists about your use of Viagra.

Patients with liver diseases should tell their doctors before Viagra is prescribed.

The side effects of Viagra include an increased incidence of headaches. A minority of Viagra users experiences a small, temporary headache.

A temporary feeling of flushing occurs in about one of ten people who are taking the medication.

Nasal congestion and indigestion are also slightly more common in Viagra users. These side effects are also temporary.

Another side effect is a temporary vision disturbance, which makes a small minority of men, see a bluish tinge after using Viagra. At higher doses, it becomes hard for a minority of men to distinguish between the colors blue and green.

If you have diseases of the retina, such as macular degeneration or retina pigmentosa, make sure to inform your physician. He or she may want you to stay at the lowest possible dose.

If you have any of these symptoms, you should let your doctor know. He or she may want to adjust the dosage of Viagra.

It also is very important to remember that Viagra does NOT

protect against sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. It also does NOT prevent conception or pregnancy.

Summary

Erectile dysfunction is a common condition. There are many ways to treat it.

Knowing about your treatment options, the benefits, and the risks and complications associated with these options will help you make a more informed choice.

Viagra is a medication for treating erectile dysfunction. Learning about its usage and side effects will help you to use Viagra appropriately.

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